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PAGE 01 BUENOS 07544 182151Z
ACTION IO-19

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INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 AID-00 INR-10 OIC-02 CIAE-00 EB-00
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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 07544

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, PHUM, PA, AR
SUBJECT: UN REPRESENTATIVE STYMIED IN ATTEMPT TO
- INVESTIGATE MISSING ARGENTINE CHILDREN
- IN PARAGUAY

REFS: (A) 87 BUENOS AIRES 9738
- (B) 87 BUENOS AIRES 8794

1. (C) SUMMARY. VISIT BY UN SPECIAL ENVOY TO
INVESTIGATE MISSING ARGENTINE CHILDREN IN
PARAGUAY AND GOP'S REFUSAL TO RECEIVE HIM PLAYED
WIDELY IN LOCAL PRESS WEEK OF JULY 11. GOA
OFFICIALS SUGGEST ARGENTINES TRYING TO REDUCE
DOMESTIC PRESSURE BY LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMUNITY
WHILE INCREASING PRESSURE ON STROESSNER GOVERNMENT,
BUT WITHOUT CREATING ANOTHER BILATERAL INCIDENT.
ARGENTINES BELIEVE PARAGUAY WELCHED ON DEAL
CONCERNING CHILDREN AND WILL CONTINUE SEARCHING
FOR WAYS TO PRY THE CHILDREN OUT OF PARAGUAY.
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PAGE 02 BUENOS 07544 182151Z

END SUMMARY.

2. (U) ARGENTINE PRESS REPORTED IN DETAIL WEEK
OF JULY 11 VISIT OF UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ADOLPH H EISNER
CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 25X6
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 17 JUL 2028
DATE/CASE ID: 22 APR 2009 200901190

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REPRESENTATIVE THEO VAN BOVEN TO INVESTIGATE FATE OF FOUR TO SIX ARGENTINE CHILDREN THOUGHT TO HAVE DISAPPEARED IN PARAGUAY DURING ARGENTINA'S "DIRTY WAR." VAN BOVEN CAME TO ARGENTINA AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ECOSOC HUMAN RIGHTS SUBCOMMITTEE. HE MET WITH PRESIDENT ALFONSIN, MFA DIRECTOR FOR INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS (DESPOUY), SECRETARY OF JUSTICE (PAIXAO), AND THE "GRANDMOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO" HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION.

3. (U) THE REAL NEWS, FROM THE ARGENTINE PERSPECTIVE, WAS THAT VAN BOVEN WAS NOT ALLOWED ENTRY INTO PARAGUAY. VAN BOVEN NOTED TO THE LOCAL PRESS THAT THE STROESSNER GOVERNMENT FOUND HIS VISIT "INOPPORTUNE" AT THE PRESENT TIME. HE ARGUED THIS WAS UNPRECEDENTED IN HISTORY OF UN SPECIAL ENVOYS AND CALLED FOR GOA SUPPORT IN DEALING WITH THIS MATTER IN AUGUST SESSION OF ECOSOC HUMAN RIGHTS SUBCOMMITTEE.

4. (C) [REDACTED] INFORMED POLOFF [REDACTED] THAT GOA WAS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR VAN BOVEN'S VISIT, BUT WAS QUITE CONTENT WITH THE ENSUING PUBLICITY. GOA HAD FACILITATED VAN BOVEN'S ACCESS TO ALL INFORMATION AND HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT IN ARGENTINA. ARGENTINES DID NOT EXPECT VAN BOVEN'S VISIT TO PRY THE FOUR CHILDREN OUT OF CONFIDENTIAL

B1

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PAGE 03 BUENOS 07544 182151Z

PARAGUAY, BUT DID HOPE IT WOULD INCREASE PRESSURE ON STROESSNER WITHOUT PROVOKING A BILATERAL INCIDENT.

5. (C) [REDACTED] SUGGESTED [REDACTED] THAT VAN BOVEN VISIT ALSO REDUCED PRESSURE ON GOA BY ITS OWN HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS. GOA WAS UNDER INTENSE DOMESTIC PRESSURE TO OBTAIN RELEASE OF THE FOUR CHILDREN ARGENTINE COURTS HAD TENTATIVELY IDENTIFIED. BY COOPERATING FULLY WITH THE UN REPRESENTATIVE, [REDACTED] GOA WAS ABLE TO SATISFY DEMANDS OF ITS OWN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMUNITY AND INCREASE PRESSURE ON THE PARAGUAYAN GOVERNMENT. BY DOING IT THROUGH THE

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UN, GOA DID NOT RISK ITS SENSITIVE BILATERAL
RELATIONSHIP.

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6. (C) COMMENT. GOA PLAYED UP THE VAN BOVEN
VISIT FOR ALL IT WAS WORTH. ASSERTIONS TO THE
CONTRARY NOTWITHSTANDING, THEY WERE PROBABLY BEHIND
THE ECOSOC HUMAN RIGHTS SUBCOMMITTEE DECISION
TO SEND A SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE. ARGENTINES
BELIEVE PARAGUAYANS VIOLATED UNDERSTANDING
REACHED LATE LAST YEAR WHEN THEY RETURNED THEIR
AMBASSADOR TO ASUNCION CONCERNING THE CHILDREN
AND ARE ANXIOUS TO APPLY PRESSURE WITHOUT DESTROYING
THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP.

GILDRED

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